

THE DESERTERS.

On my passage from Albany to New York, whilst in conversation with a gentleman, my attention was arrested by the appearance of a crowd in the fore-part of the vessel, whither we both went, and it turned out to be a Recruiting Party proceeding from Buffalo to New York, with a detachment of about sixty recruits; they appeared fine men, varying from twenty to forty years of age, and seemed to suffer much from absolute filth and want of proper rest or nourishment,—but that is common with recruits. I examined each countenance minutely, as opportunity offered, and presently I saw a face I fancied I knew—then another—another—and a fourth. I was struck with a fear that all was not right, and curiosity led me to come Jonathan over them, and find out all about them.

The first I saw, whose eyes met mine as often as I brought them in contact, and as often exchanged several piercing enquiring glances, I beckoned to, and asked him if he knew me? He said, he did remember having seen me somewhere; and the conversation continued.

I said, I presume you are an Englishman? I am, said he, but feel ashamed to acknowledge it; my mind has, since I took the oath of naturalization, been a rack to me. Feeling for him as I did, I would have waived any further conversation, but I felt that I might learn something of the man's character. He looked much dejected, and, if the face is any index to the mind, his, indeed, told a tale of bitter feeling. I resumed, You have left our Service recently, I should say? I have, indeed, Sir, was his reply—and from the time I crossed the ferry at Queenston, and placed my foot on the boasted shore of liberty, I felt myself, from that moment, fettered and lost, both to my country and myself. Curiosity led me now to enquire into the cause; after excusing myself for being so inquisitive, I begged him to open his mind to me, and inform me of the cause of his very apparent unhappiness.

Str, he replied, I see you are an Englishman, and what is more I know you to be a soldier, and one

who has seen much of the world, both in the field and in quarters, and, therefore, I hope you will rather pity the false step I have taken, than blame me, though I can never consider myself again worthy of being called a soldier. It was on the evening of the —, about five weeks ago, I was the corporal in charge of a guard at Queenston, and entrusted to my custody was a young man, a prisoner, who had been brought in under arrest; by some mishap during the night he escaped, and, when it was discovered, the whole guard found themselves in a very unpleasant situation, and well knew the seriousness of the consequences of such a breach of trust, as to permit the escape of a prisoner. We in vain tried to discover his haunt, and at length I spoke to several of them, and in the deperst manner, painted the result of the affair, and at the same time pointed out to them the means of escape. On guard, at the dead hour of night, close to the ferry-boat, and a river which, but a few yards across, enabled us to defy the power of the British—the prospect of immediately joining the Americans, and thus preventing ourselves from, perhaps, two years' imprisonment—all these pictures seemed to dazzle the minds of most of the guard, and four out of six acceded, and, with myself, left the guard, and rowed across to the "shore that shields the soldier's crime." We had little or no money, and we traversed our way to Buffalo, where a party of the American Army were recruiting. Having no other object in view than enlisting, we all at once joined them, and received half the bounty, (five dollars,) and took the oath of naturalization, vowing, in the most solemn terms, to support America in all her undertakings—to fight most vehemently against every other nation, most especially that of Great Britain. The thought of the latter seemed to choke me; my heart throbbed, and my senses seemed to recoil at the idea,—more especially against Great Britain, dear old Britain, thought I,—can it be possible I have sworn so!—My country—whose soil calls aloud for the aid of every heart to whom she gave birth—whose nobility and valor has raised her high above every other na-